



House Education Newsletter

MARCH 2006

One More Week To Go....

With only a few days left in the 2006 Legislative Session, lawmakers certainly had their work cut out for them!

Monday marked the final passage of House Bill 543, which permits local boards of education to allow spouses to transfer up to 10 days of sick

leave for the purposes of maternity leave, illness or the illness of a family member. Another measure on its way to Governor Purdue's desk, is HB 984. This piece of legislation grants excused absences to children of military parents prior to their

deployment or while on leave from deployment overseas. Students will be allowed a maximum of 5 days per school year.



Tuesday marked another "Committee Day" under the Gold Dome. Senate Bill 543 passed the House Agriculture Committee, urging state and local governments to have bio-diesel make up 2% of their total volume of fuel consumption.

The measure is an effort toward promoting the use of bio-fuels in Georgia. The House Education took up several Senate bills on Tuesday as well. SB 288 prohibits teachers from being coerced or required to change a student's grade. It further states that such actions be considered ethics violations, reportable to the Professional Standards Commission.



Intern Spotlight



My name is Esmeralda Godinez. I am 21 years old. I'm a junior at the University of West Georgia. My major is Political Science and minor in Real Estate. I would like to attend law school in the near future as well as get involved in the real estate industry. I am originally from Mexico but have lived in the Forsyth County area for 16 years with my Mother and three brothers. I have been on the Deans list for Spring/Fall of 2004 and 2005. I have a 3.5 GPA. I have maintained the Hope Scholarship through my years in college. I am a member of the Latin Society and soon to be a member in Pi Sigma Alpha which is a political science honors organization at West Georgia.

I am between the Speaker's Office and House Photography. In the Speaker's Office, I sit in the receptionist desk and answer the phone and take messages. I may direct people to different offices sometimes. Constituents will call and give their opinion on legislation that is being passed or they may want information about their representative. If anyone needs help in the office I help if I can. In House Photography, I help the photographers. My duties range from logging pictures into the database, locating pictures, printing pictures, and editing pictures. Editing pictures is something new that I have learned and I really enjoy it. Another plus about working photography is that I have learned the majority of representatives' names and faces.

Week continued...

Provisions of the HOPE Scholarship were addressed by House members on Wednesday through the passage of SB 506. The bill provides a set amount for mandatory fees for all eligible post secondary institutions created after January 1, 2004. On Thursday, the 36th day of Session, the Senate passed its version of the 2006-2007 Budget. Since the two chambers have not been able to reach an agreement, the leadership of both houses will now be negotiating a final version. Georgians now have the right to defend themselves both inside and outside of

their homes through the passage of Senate bill 396.

Representatives took up several hours of floor debate prior to the passage of Senate bill 529. Known



as the Georgia Security/Immigration Compliance Act, this bill is aimed at regulating the services provided by this state to people who are not legal U.S. citizens. The bill's

main focus is holding employers accountable for incorporating the use of illegal labor exceeding compensation in the amount of \$600 or greater. With this bill, Georgia employers will no longer be able to benefit from the Georgia Tax System by hiring illegal workers. Floor debate will resume Friday morning at 9:00 for day 37.

*Jenee' Burke
Brent Cranfield*

For more information, please visit our website or contact the House Communications Department.

State Representative John Yates



Born and raised on a farm in Northern Spalding County during the depression, Representative Yates claims they didn't know they were poor until the government told them. He was able to attend high school on a bond grant, which he had to walk 3 miles to each day before graduating in 1938. He and 3 of his 4 brothers were all actually in WWII; 2 were prisoners of war and one was hospitalized, but they all came back home afterwards. Representative Yates himself was selected as a candidate for Officer School and became a second lieutenant in Field Artillery.

His military service included roles in several historical turning points, such as flying over the English Channel shortly after the invasion of Normandy, for which he was awarded a medal. He also played a key role in opening up the battle lines at the Battle of the Bulge, the biggest battle of the war. Apparently, a tank was preventing the opening of battle lines, so Representative Yates flew over him, dropping a can of gasoline onto the tank. The enemy tanker mistakenly thought he was being fired upon and

started moving which opened up the battle lines.

Aside from military service, Representative Yates began a 35-year career with Ford Motor Company, starting the day the factory opened in Hapefield in 1947. He began as a builder, but later after attending classes at Georgia State University he began being promoted. Promotions carried him all the way to Los Angeles as a parts distribution manager.

Representative John Yates was actually the very first Republican candidate ever elected in Spalding County. He began serving in 1989, was defeated in the next election, but won in a landslide victory the following term and has been in office ever since! When asked what drew him into politics, he replied that in his years of traveling with Ford Motor Company, Georgia seemed to be the only state that he'd ever lived in that lacked a strong two party system. He wasn't happy with the representative in his area so he simply ran against him and won.

His long service to the state and military experience worked to Representative Yates' appoint-

ment as the Chairman of the Defense and Veterans Affairs Committee. He has always been a strong supporter of America and the military. Chairman Yates is a member of the Voice of the Veterans, an organization that speaks to children about patriotism. He also holds membership in the Appropriations, Higher Education, Reapportionment and Motor Vehicles Committees. The Representative is currently working to require competitive bidding in the education system to make sure that our schools receive the best services and materials possible. He believes in being honest and taking care of the needs of the people. Story continued on next page.



Yates continued....



The Representative and his wife have three children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He and Annie live on a 40-acre farm in Griffin with a gorgeous 2 ½ acre lake, a photograph of which is proudly displayed in his office. Even with the hurriedness that comes with the job of being a legislator, Chairman Yates

makes sure that he personally answers every single card and letter that he receives, even if it is to every single member of an elementary school class. He believes in keeping the government simple and making it more user-friendly. He also is committed to making sure that people know what he is doing, for he feels that they have the right to know. All in all, Representative John Yates believes in being a representative.

In honor of his outstanding service to the State of Georgia and lifetime accomplishments, House Members passed a resolution for Representative Yates during the 2005 Session of the General Assembly.

New Website Features!!!!

Members of the House and Senate haven't been the only people under the Gold Dome hard at work, staffers have been burning the midnight oil as well. We've added several more exciting features to the Education pages just for you! Check out the interview of the Speaker of the House and two State Representatives conducted by two 14 year old students from Union Grove Middle

School. You can access their class project from the Middle School Education page under the Public section, or on the main House page under Daily Updates. Contact House Communications to find out how you can set up your own interview or virtual visit!

Our own Georgia version of the popular game show Jeopardy is now available on our online games. You can also take a stab at

writing your very own press releases— just like the House Members have published! Check out "Your Name in the Paper!" As always, we value your input and welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have. This is YOUR House and we want you to feel as welcome as possible!

